Entry Episode Is the Eighth in

By Jane Rippeteau
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Yesterday's penetration of the White House grounds by a man claiming to be wired with explosives was the second time in 10 months and the eighth time in the past 20 years that the compound has been illegally, sometimes forcibly, entered.

One of the more dramatic episodes occurred just before 2 a.m. last Feb. 17, when a young soldier from Ft. Meade, Md., landed a stolen Army helicopter on the south lawn amid police gunfire.

The soldier, Pfc. Robert Kenneth Preston, 20, had flunked out of Army flight school the previous September and took off virtually unnoticed from the Ft. Meade helicopter compound about midnight. Until he was discovered by radar nearly an hour later, he led police on an hour-long wild airborne chase around Maryland and downtown Washington.

White House protection officials were unaware of the illegal flight over restricted airspace between the Capitol and the Kennedy Center until the helicopter hovered directly over the White House itself about 1 a.m., without attempting to land. Officials of the Executive Protective Service were ready when it returned an hour later, and forced it down in a blaze of gunfire.

Preston was treated for wounds sustained in the incident at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, booked by D.C. police on a charge of unlawful entry and taken to Walter Reed's psychiatric facility at Forest Glen. His only explaination for his action was that he was "just goofing off' and "buzzing everything that was popular." He was not armed.

By Margaret Thomas—The Washington Post

Firemen keep watch over White House during bomb threat.

At the time, law enforcement officials said Preston could have flown right into the White House if he had not attracted so much attention by his bizarre 50-mile joy-ride over Prince George's and Anne Arundel counties and the heart of Washington.

Other successful penetrations of the White House grounds include two entries by car and two on foot:

Feb. 9, 1973. A Hyattsville man was arrested after he drove a brand new Mercedes-Benz sedan through a partly open White House gate and skidded to a stop just short of the North Portico.

The man, Roger W. Longley, 26, of 5704 Queens Chapel Rd., veered off East Executive Avenue — in a Mercedes with a $10,060 price tag in the window— and rammed through an iron gate that had been left partly open to allow tourists to leave the White House grounds.

Longley was ordered committed to a hospital by a U.S. District Court judge after his court-appointed attorney and a U.S. marshal said he had been acting irrationally.

Jan. 24, 1972. Desiring "to take a personal look" at the White House, a 22-year-old airman scaled the ground's spiked-top iron fence and wandered around on the south lawn for several minutes before he was caught.

Gerald C. LeBlanc, of Baldwinsville, Mass., was charged with unlawful entry. At the time, he was serving as a security patrolman with the Air Force in Dover, Del.

Aug. 19, 1971. An unidentified man drove a Volkswagen into the White House driveway, leaped out of it and ran off. East Executive Avenue was cordoned while Ft. McNair bomb specialists searched for explosives. They found none. The man was not caught.

March 10, 1968. A man from Cincinnati scaled a White House fence near the northwest gate and walked about the grounds briefly until the Secret Service escorted him off to St. Elizabeths Hospital for mental observation.

One of the most dramatic violations of Presidential security occurred at Blair House in 1950 when two gunmen attempted to assassinate President Harry S Truman.

At 2:15 p.m. on Nov. 1, 1950, Oscar Collazo and Grieselio Torresola, two Puerto Rican nationalists, tried to shoot their way into Blair House in an attempt to kill Truman, and thus dramatize their demands for Puerto Rican independence.

Truman, who was occupying Blair House because the White House was undergoing repairs, was not harmed. But a White House guard, Pvt. Leslie Coffelt, was killed in the crossfire.

Torresola was also killed. Collazo, wounded, received a commuted sentence of life imprisonment.

Other White House security breaches have been less dramatic.

In one episode, Joseph J. Nebbiai, described as an absentminded New Yorker who came to Washington to

20 Years

get a patent on a toy scooter, was arrested on Oct. 5, 1955 inside the White House with loaded automatic handgun.

Nebbiai complained to an incredulous judge that he had wandered aimlessly into a line of tourists that, unknown to him, was enroute to the White House. He said he thought he was in a library, but when he noticed the guards, surmissed it was a museum filled with priceless treasures.

The 30-year-old inventor paid a $25 fine and went home.

The Executive Protective Service is also responsible for the security of about 21 diplomatic missions in Washington and Maryland, and at the direction of the President, EPS is occasionally assigned to guard foreign government missions in New York City. A Secret Service spokesman would not say which missions are now under EPS guard.

Last Nov. 18, the Philippine ambassador to the United States and the embassy's economic attache were held hostage for more than 10 hours in the Washington chancery by a gunman who wanted a passport for his son to leave the Philippines.

The gunman, Napoleon B. Lechoco, a former Manila lawyer, who came to the United States in 1972, did not release his hostage until he was assured by authorities that his son could leave the Philippines.

The ambassador, Eduardo Z. Romualdez, and economic attache, Mario S. Lagdameo, were not harmed.

The incident brought scores of heavily armed Executive Protective Service police, metropolitan police and FBI agents to the red brick embassy, located at 1617 Massachusetts Ave. NW.